



Executive Officer's Statement

October 19, 2006

Governor Signs Bills That Benefit Victims

In the closing days of this year's legislative session, Governor Schwarzenegger signed many bills that continue the momentum of California's progress in addressing victims' rights and issues. The signing of these bills that expand protection and assistance for victims is another milestone for victims. Several of the measures directly impact the Victim Compensation Program. Among the new laws that will take effect January 1st are provisions that:

- Cover child care costs when a victim who was the main child care provider can no longer do so.
- Allow home security enhancements even when the crime has occurred elsewhere.
- Expand reimbursement for crime scene cleanup to violent crimes besides homicide.
- Create a mechanism for victims to receive restitution order payments without having to file a claim with the Victim Compensation Program.
- Clarify that relocation expenses are limited to one victim per crime but that multiple moves may be covered as long as costs do not exceed \$2,000.
- Extend a partnership between the San Francisco Trauma Center and the Victim Compensation Program to provide victim services.
- Add victim advocates to the list of people whose personal information is protected from being posted online with intent to cause bodily harm.
- Define the content for a Victim's Rights Card that law enforcement officers may distribute once their city or county has adopted an authorizing resolution.

Domestic Violence Month Observances

As a member of the California State Domestic Violence Interagency Collaboration, the VCGCB joined other state agencies in special events on October 11 to observe Domestic Violence Month. We provided an information booth at the State Capitol event, which included an address by actor and domestic violence survivor Victor Rivers. In addition, staff attended the Secretary of State's Domestic Violence Awareness Forum, which focused on "Building a Safer California." The day was successful in bringing greater visibility to an issue that, unfortunately, affects many Californians.

Cyber Safety Summit

The emerging issue of cyber crime was the focus of a highly successful daylong summit hosted by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) on October 18. The VCGCB was a sponsor for the event, partnering with the DCA and others to publicize the summit, provide an information booth, and participate in the many informative workshops. While many types of crime often associated with the Internet, such as financial scams, are not addressed by the Victim Compensation Program, child pornography is an eligible crime and – distressingly – is increasingly linked to the Internet. The Cyber Safety Summit was a valuable, eye-opening opportunity to learn about what can be done to keep children safe when they use the Internet.

CaRES Reaches New Milestones

The implementation of CaRES, the new claims processing system, continues with two new milestones reached in October. Beginning October 2nd, all claims coming into the VCGCB in Sacramento were entered into the CaRES system. On October 6, the first bill was paid from a claim entered into CaRES. Both are significant steps forward in our phased implementation of this powerful technology that holds the promise for more efficient service for claimants.

Summit on School Safety

Frank Henderson Jr., President of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, attended President Bush's Summit on School Safety. The conference was hosted by Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Education Secretary Margaret Spellings. The summit brought together educators, law enforcement officials, representatives of victim programs, parents and federal officials.

VCGCB Updates

- CaRES was one of the three technology projects that were instrumental in placing California on the list of the Top 25 Digital States in the nation for 2006. In 2004, the last time the survey was conducted, California did not make the list. This year, the state was ranked 16th.
- We are hosting eligibility training for new claims processing staff in Joint Powers counties. A two-week training on payments and reimbursements will be scheduled at a later date.
- Restitution staff are conducting CRC site visits to Orange, San Bernardino, Fresno and San Mateo counties this month.